REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)* 16-05-2006	2. REPORT TYPE FINAL	3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)*

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

Structural Vulnerabilities of Networked Insurgencies:

Adapting Counterinsurgency Strategies to the New Adversary

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)

Martin J. Muckian

Paper Advisor (if Any): Dr. Donald Chisholm

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

Joint Military Operations Department
Naval War College
686 Cushing Road
Newport, RI 02841-1207

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the JMO Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.

14. ABSTRACT

Modern insurgencies based on networked organizations, such as the one in Iraq, are structurally different from the Maoist movements of the twentieth century. Applying counterinsurgency methods from that era will not be effective against the new type of insurgency organization. Strategies must be adapted to consider the new insurgent doctrine. This paper contrasts the Maoist and Iraqi insurgencies in terms of organization and strategy. It examines the differences in the vulnerabilities of the two types of insurgencies in organization, political cohesion, base of support, and use of information technology. This analysis suggests that networked insurgencies may be more vulnerable to disruption than destruction. Possible means of disruption include critical network nodes, organizational cohesion, support sources, and information technology.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, Maoist, Iraq, Networks

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:

a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE
UNCLASSIFIED	UNCLASSIFIED	UNCLASSIFIED

17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT

18. NUMBER OF PAGES

24

19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
Chairman, JMO Dept

19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER *(include area code)*
401-841-3556

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.

STRUCTURAL VULNERABILITIES OF NETWORKED INSURGENCIES:

ADAPTING COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGIES TO THE NEW ADVERSARY

by

Martin J. Muckian

LCDR, USN

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

16 May 2006

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Modern insurgencies based on networked organizations, such as the one in Iraq, are structurally different from the Maoist movements of the twentieth century. Applying counterinsurgency methods from that era will not be effective against the new type of insurgency organization. Strategies must be adapted to consider the new insurgent doctrine. This paper contrasts the Maoist and Iraqi insurgencies in terms of organization and strategy. It examines the differences in the vulnerabilities of the two types of insurgencies in organization, political cohesion, base of support, and use of information technology. This analysis suggests that networked insurgencies may be more vulnerable to disruption than destruction. Possible means of disruption include critical network nodes, organizational cohesion, support sources, and information technology.

INTRODUCTION

The ongoing conflict in Iraq has sparked a renewed interest in the study of counterinsurgency, leading many to comb the wars of the twentieth century, the "golden age of insurgencies,"[1] for lessons that can be applied to today. Much of this recent analysis has focused on the knowledge gained from fighting Marxist revolutionaries.

The insurgent of today, however, is not the Maoist of yesterday. His organization and methods are strikingly different from his twentieth century predecessors. The modern insurgent aims to defeat his opponent by psychological warfare and terrorism instead of military action.[2] He draws his support from criminal networks as opposed to popular mobilization. He fights a netwar not a People's War.

These dissimilarities raise the question of just how much of twentieth century counterinsurgency thought can be applied to twenty-first century conflicts. Methods from past wars are put forth as guiding principles with only a nod towards these differences.[3] Applying these principles without examination could lead, at best, to wasted effort, at worst, to defeat.

Sun Tzu said, "Know your enemy."[4] The structure of a movement, meaning its organization and methods, is the key to understanding it. Modern and Maoist insurgencies are structurally different. In order to be effective, counterinsurgencies must understand these differences and adapt their methods to the structure of their modern adversaries.

---

[1]Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2004), 8.

[2]Thomas Hammes, *Insurgency: Modern Warfare Evolves into a Fourth Generation,* Strategic Forum, no. 214 (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 2005), 2.

[3]See, for example, Robert Cassidy, "Back to the Street Without Joy: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam and Other Small Wars," *Parameters* 34, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 73-83.

[4]Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel Griffith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 84.

This paper examines the differences between Maoist and modern insurgencies and the implications for counterinsurgency methods. First, it contrasts the two types of insurgencies in terms of their organizations and strategies. Using that information, it analyzes the vulnerabilities of both Maoist and modern insurgencies in their organization, political cohesion, support base, and use of information technology. From this analysis, it draws conclusions about how to modify twentieth century methods to combat the modern insurgent.

The purpose of this paper is not to propose a comprehensive strategy for a modern counterinsurgency. Instead, it looks at one component of such a plan: understanding and exploiting the insurgent's structural vulnerabilities. It does not exhaust this line of analysis; the conclusions drawn here are demonstrative of the possibilities of this methodology.

Throughout this paper, the conflict in Iraq is used as an illustrative example of a modern insurgency. The Iraqi insurgency is thus far the most advanced embodiment of netwar, where "small groups coordinate, communicate, and conduct their campaigns in an internetted manner, without a precise central command."[5] As such, this conflict is a powerful predictor of the future of insurgency.

STRUCTURE OF THE MAOIST AND IRAQI INSURGENCIES

The first step in learning to defeat this new netwar adversary is to understand how its structure differs from past movements. This section contrasts the organization and strategy of the Maoist and Iraqi insurgencies.

---

[5]John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, "The Advent of Netwar (Revisited)," in *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 6; Bruce Hoffman, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2004), 17.

Organization

The last half of the twentieth century saw the appearance of many effective revolutionary movements based on Mao's strategy of People's War.[6] Examples include the Hukbalahap in the Philippines, the Malaya Races Liberation Army (MRLA) in Malaya, and the Viet Cong in Vietnam.

These groups were all organized in similar hierarchies.[7] For example, at the head of the Viet Cong was the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), a committee composed of the top political and military leaders. Below the COSVN were six regional committees, each of which oversaw several provincial and district offices. At the district level was an extensive support organization including medical personnel, weapons manufacturers, training teams, and fiscal auditors. At the lowest level, the cadres organized the entire population to support the movement. Armed bodies consisted of main force units, local guerrillas, and village militias. These military units were fully integrated with the political hierarchy, giving the Viet Cong tight organizational control.[8]

In contrast, the Iraqi insurgency is a constantly shifting network of disparate organizations.[9] There are currently three main armed groups: *Tandhim al-Qa'ida fi Bilad al-Rafidayn* (al-Qaeda's Organization in Mesopotamia), *Jaysh Ansar al-Sunna* (Partisans of the

---

[6]Metz and Millen, 8.

[7]William Duiker, *The Communist Road to Victory in Vietnam* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), 196; Lawrence Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection: A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines, 1946-1955* (Washington, D.C.: Analysis Branch, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1987), 48-50; Robert Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1972), 7-8.

[8]Duiker, 196; Walter Davison, *Some Observations on Viet Cong Operations in the Villages* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1967), 49-50, 63-64, 77.

[9]Hoffman, 17; Anthony Cordesman, "Iraq's Evolving Insurgency and the Risk of Civil War," working draft, updated April 26, 2006 [document on-line] (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2006, accessed on 29 April 2006), 96; available from http://www.csis.org/component/option,com_csis_ pub/task,view/id,3164/type,1/; Internet.

Sunna Army), and *al-Jaysh al-Islami fil-'Iraq* (The Islamic Army in Iraq). There are also a number of smaller groups.[10] The International Crisis Group has suggested that each of these is "more a loose network of factions involving a common 'trademark' than a fully integrated organisation."[11] Each group is composed of many small, compartmented or autonomous cells, some as small as two or three people.[12] Many cells specialize in one particular function, such as mortar attacks, improvised explosive device (IED) attacks, assassinations, surveillance, or kidnappings.[13] These groups' relationships are very fluid. As Bruce Hoffman described:

> In this loose, ambiguous, and constantly shifting environment, constellations of cells or collections of individuals gravitate toward one another to carry out armed attacks, exchange intelligence, trade weapons, or engage in joint training and then disperse at times never to operate together again.[14]

In contrast to the Maoist hierarchy, this network of insurgent factions has no central leadership.[15] For this loose organization, consultation, coordination and consensus must substitute for central direction. But far more than simple coordination is required if these organizations are to be effective. Networks need what John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt called shared narrative and doctrine to maintain their cohesion and focus.[16] The narrative is the "story" the network tells to communicate a "sense of cause, purpose, and mission" and to en-

---

[10]International Crisis Group, *In Their Own Words: Reading the Iraqi Insurgency,* Middle East Report, no. 50 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2006), 1-3.

[11]Ibid., 2.

[12]Cordesman, 96, 152.

[13]Cordesman, 126; Montgomery McFate, "Iraq: The Social Context of IEDs," *Military Review* 25, no. 3 (May-June 2005): 39.

[14]Hoffman, 17.

[15]Ibid., 16.

[16]John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, "What Next for Networks and Netwars?" in *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 324.

gender a "sense of identity and belonging" among members of the network and potential recruits.[17] The insurgents' narrative is that they are patriotic and pious freedom fighters battling to expel a foreign occupier and overthrow an illegitimate regime. By simultaneously emphasizing nationalism and Islamism, this narrative offers something for everyone and bonds together groups of people who have little in common.[18]

Shared doctrine enables the network to operate in an integrated manner without central control.[19] For example, the insurgents share information about IED operations: techniques, tactics, enemy vulnerabilities, and target priorities. This allows groups acting independently to conduct IED attacks in a coherent pattern.[20] In short, the insurgents "compensate for lack of [central leadership] by emphasising operational and ideological cohesion."[21]

Beyond narrative and doctrine, there is another element to the cohesion of the insurgency: information technology. The ubiquity of cellular telephones and computers is largely what makes networked organizations possible.[22] The insurgency is particularly dependent on the internet for communication and organization.[23] This topic is discussed more fully below, but it is important to keep in mind that information technology is not simply an aid to a network; it is essential to its functioning.

---

[17]Ibid., 328.

[18]International Crisis Group, 11.

[19]Arquilla and Ronfeldt, "Networks and Netwars," 333.

[20]Cordesman, 122-126; International Crisis Group, 23.

[21]International Crisis Group, 4.

[22]Michele Zanini and Sean Edwards, "The Networking of Terror in the Information Age," in John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, ed., *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 35-36.

[23]International Crisis Group, 1, 4.

Strategies

Much of the growth and success of Marxist revolutionaries in the twentieth century was due to the effectiveness of Mao's insurgent strategy: People's War.[24] This was a sophisticated program to build an insurgency in a step-by-step manner. First, the movement focused on intensive underground political activities to build a base of support. It developed a comprehensive political program that highlighted grievances with the government and made detailed promises of a better future under the revolutionaries. This program was the key weapon of the insurgency, as Mao realized that revolution was primarily a political contest.[25] Next, the insurgents conducted guerrilla actions in a targeted area. Police and security forces were attacked. Government officials were assassinated or forced to flee. The aim was to destroy government control of the region, leaving a power vacuum for the insurgents to fill. The insurgency then integrated the area into the movement; the population, either by persuasion or coercion, provided recruits, supplies, and cooperation. Using this strategy, the movement slowly expanded. Eventually, when the insurgent forces grew strong enough, the government could be defeated by conventional warfare.[26]

The Iraqi strategy differs from the Maoist People's War on almost every point. First, there was no preliminary political mobilization.[27] In fact, the Iraqi movement is characterized by a lack of any political program for the future of the country. This is a deliberate strategy of the insurgency to avoid divisive issues.[28] Second, the Iraqis do not conduct large

---

[24]Metz and Millen, 8.

[25]Hammes, *Modern Warfare,* 2.

[26]Metz and Millen 8-9; Davison, 7, 77; Hoffman, 17.

[27]Hoffman, 17.

[28]International Crisis Group, 11.

scale guerrilla operations. Viet Cong main force units usually fought in battalion strength or greater, independent guerrilla units in company strength.[29] Iraqis often operate in groups as small as three men and rarely more than fifty men.[30] Third, the Iraqi insurgency does not seek to control territory. The lesson it learned from the siege of Fallujah in 2004 was not to fight from a static position. Finally, the Iraqis do not aspire to win a conventional military victory. Their strategy is to maintain a barrage of terrorist attacks on coalition forces, the Iraqi government, and collaborators, with the goal of inflicting enough casualties to cause the coalition to withdraw and the government to cease to function.[31] As Thomas Hammes stated, the insurgent's strategy is to "destroy the enemy's political will."[32]

DESTRUCTION VERSUS DISRUPTION

Attacking the insurgent organization directly is an important element of a comprehensive strategy. Counterinsurgencies against Maoists have often aimed to destroy the leadership hierarchy. One example is the Phoenix Program instituted in Vietnam. This effort attempted to neutralize the Viet Cong by attacking its hierarchy in the villages. Police and intelligence units worked to identify and arrest the insurgent cadres.[33]

A Maoist organization was particularly vulnerable to this type of attack. The leadership hierarchy, from the central committee down to the cadres in the villages, ran the movement and directed all its operations. The cadre strength in each village was often as few as

---

[29]Duiker, 212, 249.

[30]Cordesman, 122, 152.

[31]International Crisis Group, 23-25.

[32]Thomas Hammes, "4th Generation Warfare," *Armed Forces Journal* 142, no. 4 (November 2004): 41.

[33]Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 279.

ten or twenty men. Destroying a part of the hierarchy would cripple insurgency in a given area.[34]

The United States is following a similar strategy in Iraq. U.S. intelligence assigns each insurgent leader a location in a tiered structure. A large focus of effort is directed towards capturing or eliminating this leadership.[35]

But a networked organization, like the Iraqi insurgency, is very resilient to this type of attack. First, as explained previously, this type of organization has no leadership hierarchy. Targeting a leader may impact his subgroup or cell, but will not degrade the movement as a whole. Second, as Luther Gerlach explained from his study of networked organizations, often people who are perceived by outsiders as leaders are more accurately described as "traveling evangelists."[36] These persons energize and encourage the movement and may help with recruiting and organizing, but they are not operational directors. As a result, eliminating them will not destroy the movement.[37] Third, a network can sustain significant damage and continue to function. The self-organizing quality of a network allow it to make new connections and work around the injury. To destroy a network requires eliminating a large number of its individual nodes.[38]

[34]Lewy, 279; Davison, 49-50.

[35]International Crisis Group, 25; Cordesman, 162; Sherifa Zuhur, *A Hundred Osamas: Islamist Threats and the Future of Counterinsurgency* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), 46.

[36]Luther Gerlach, "The Structure of Social Movements: Environmental Activism and Its Opponents," in John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, ed., *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 296.

[37]Ibid., 296-297.

[38]Phil Williams, "Transnational Criminal Networks," in John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, ed., *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 72.

So attacking the perceived insurgency leadership, while it could have a positive propaganda value, is unlikely to have a decisive effect.[39] A better paradigm for a counterinsurgency strategy may be found in studying law enforcement operations against criminal organizations. Criminal networks, like any other, are very hard to completely eradicate. Law enforcement strategies, therefore, often focus on disrupting the network's ability to function rather than its destruction.[40]

A network's vulnerabilities to disruption lie in what Phil Williams calls critical nodes. A critical node is a person or cell whose function has a "high level of importance and a low level of redundancy."[41] This could mean a person with an important but rare skill. For example, British intelligence believes that there are only a handful of bomb-makers producing the bulk of the IEDs.[42] Or, it could mean a node which serves as the sole link between two organizations. Although these people may not be high-ranking, they play a vital role in the network, and their elimination will degrade the insurgency's ability to operate more than the removal of its ostensible leadership. This understanding is key to combating a networked insurgency. A network may be hard to destroy, but it can be disrupted.[43]

POLITICAL VULNERABILITIES

Every insurgency espouses a political program of some sort to explain its actions and attract supporters. Maoists carefully crafted their political agenda to fit the local circumstances. Usually, it was based, in part, on real grievances and carefully incorporated the

[39]Zuhur, 15.

[40]Williams, 91.

[41]Ibid., 93.

[42]McFate, 38.

[43]Williams, 93-94.

hopes and fears of the local population.[44] Because of the ideological discipline of the Maoist insurgents, fracturing the movement by attacking its political agenda was generally not possible. Instead, the standard counterinsurgency response was to create an alternative political program which addressed the underlying grievances of the population. Typically, reforms, political concessions, and economic development were all part of the government's program. In this way, the government competed with the insurgency for the loyalty of the people.[45]

All this is certainly still applicable and needed in Iraq. But the Iraqi insurgency does not have the political cohesion of its Maoist predecessor. The movement is a loose coalition of groups with widely divergent tenets and goals. There are a number of potentially divisive issues, among them ideology.

The insurgency is balanced between nationalism and Islamic extremism. Of the three main armed groups, al-Qaeda's Organization in Mesopotamia, led by Abu Musab Zarqawi, is associated with Islamic extremism. On the other hand, the Islamic Army in Iraq is more nationalist in outlook.[46] Internally, each organization is a mix of groups across the spectrum of ideologies.[47] To achieve cohesion, the insurgency has converged on a middle ground that emphasizes patriotism and Salafism. The appeal to patriotism attracts the secular nationalists. The emphasis on Salafism appeals to the Islamists, while not repelling the nationalists. Salafism is not a political program; it simply calls for correct personal conduct.[48]

---

[44]Metz and Millen, 7-8.

[45]Chaim Kaufmann, "Intervention in Ethnic and Ideological Civil Wars: Why One Can Be Done and the Other Can't," *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (Autumn 1996): 70-71.

[46]International Crisis Group, 1-2.

[47]Cordesman, 152.

[48]International Crisis Group, 11.

To hold this dissimilar coalition together, any discussion of events beyond expelling the coalition and toppling the government is carefully avoided.[49] On the one hand, Zarqawi's group is affiliated with al-Qaeda, which is committed to establishing a caliphate in the region. In contrast, another group was at pains to state that, although no political agenda had been articulated, its program definitely did not include an Islamic government in Iraq.[50]

These issues are potential cracks in the shared narrative that holds the movement together. Further cracks show when the insurgency has tried to respond to a political initiatives by the government. For example, the January 2005 elections forced the insurgency to state a position. But there was no agreement about how to respond: some groups threatened to attack voters, others urged a boycott. The result was chaos which damaged the insurgency's standing with the public.[51]

These examples show the limitations of the narrative as a means of cohesion. As long as the network confronts issues that are within the shared story of the narrative, it can maintain its unity. However, if issues outside the narrative arise, such as the elections or an agenda for future of Iraq, the network loses its cohesion as each group responds according to its own ideology. The network may be capable of reaching a consensus, but this takes time.[52] This disjointedness demonstrates that the political cohesion of a networked insurgency is directly vulnerable in a way the Maoist revolutionaries were not.

---

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid., 18-19.

[51]Ibid., 17.

[52]The current consensus among the insurgent groups emerged slowly over a period of a year. Ibid., 8.

SEPARATING THE INSURGENT FROM SUPPORT

All insurgencies need access to resources, among them recruits, money, supplies, and weapons.[53] An important consideration for counterinsurgencies is to understand how the insurgent obtains these necessities. The Maoist strategy required occupying territory and eventually conventional warfare, which in turn required large armed forces. To build these forces and maintain them in the field demanded large quantities of recruits and supplies. The insurgency gained these resources by controlling the population, which was often coerced into providing people and resources to the movement. For example, as Walter Davison wrote, "The Viet Cong treated villages under their control...primarily as sources of manpower, rice, and money with which to carry on the war."[54]

The heart of many counterinsurgency strategies was an attempt to physically separate the insurgent from this base of support. The British executed what is arguably the most sophisticated and most successful version of this strategy while fighting the MRLA. Chinese squatters, the base of support for the MRLA, were systematically moved into fortified New Villages, where they could be both protected and watched. Strict controls were put on the movement of people and food and other supplies. In this way, the British successfully interdicted the flow of materials and recruits to the MRLA. A primary reason for the surrender of MRLA guerrillas was hunger.[55]

---

[53]Metz and Millen, 7.

[54]Davison, 77.

[55]Komer, 53, 61.

The success of the British strategy in Malaya and other similar efforts have caused some to call for applying these methods in Iraq.[56] But a population control strategy is not likely to be effective against the Iraqi insurgency because it does not depend so heavily or directly on the population as its Maoist predecessor.

First, the Iraqi insurgency needs far less manpower. Unlike the Maoists, its strategy does not call for controlling territory or conventional warfare; it does not require large guerrilla forces. The insurgency can meet all its personnel needs through volunteers or by hiring criminals or the unemployed.[57] Second, the Iraqi insurgents are dispersed and living among the general population in an urban environment, often at home with their families. The movement does not need to supply large guerrilla units in remote areas. Food and other supplies can be purchased openly; vendors may not know they are selling to insurgents. Strategies that aim to prevent the insurgency from controlling or coercing the population in order to cut off manpower and supplies are not likely to be effective, simply because the Iraqi groups do not need to control or coerce the population to obtain what they needs.

Instead, an effective counterinsurgency strategy must understand the sources of support. The Iraqi insurgency has at least three separate means of financing: former regime leaders, overseas fundraising, and criminal activities.

Sources from outside Iraq are a major source of funding for the insurgency. This includes both former regime officials and groups from countries such as Saudi Arabia and Jor-

---

[56]See, for example, Andrew Krepinevich Jr., "How to Win in Iraq," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 5 (September/October 2005): 94 and Wade Markel, "Draining the Swamp: The British Strategy of Population Control." *Parameters* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 46.

[57]Hoffman, 12.

don. One insurgent financier was captured with $35 million and access to over $2 billion

worth of monetary assets stolen from the former Iraqi regime.[58]

Crime has become a major source of funding. For example, kidnapping is a lucrative

business for the insurgency, with the average ransom at $25,000. Oil smuggling is also prof-

itable, with an estimated $200,000 worth of oil stolen each day. [59] It also appears that some

cells have become specialized in criminal activities; one cell might handle kidnappings, for

example.[60] If so, these may be prime examples of critical nodes.

The criminal connections of the insurgency are both a strength and a weakness. Hav-

ing independent sources of funding gives the insurgents independence and flexibility.[61]

However, criminal associations can cause backlash against the movement.[62]

To be effective, a counterinsurgency must aim to sever the connections between the

insurgency and its sources of funding. Traditional population controls will not do this.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY VULNERABILITIES

One of the ways that a network such as the Iraqi insurgency departs from its hierar-

chical predecessors is its dependence on information technology. It is important to under-

stand that this technology is not simply a communication tool; in large part, it is what makes

a networked organization possible.

---

[58]Hoffman, 12; Robert Looney, "The Business of Insurgency," *The National Interest* no. 81 (Fall 2005): 67; Cordesman, 147, 165.

[59]Looney, 69-70.

[60]Ibid., 68.

[61]Metz and Millen, 13.

[62]For example, an Iraqi television program on which captured insurgents confess to criminal activities has been particularly damaging to the insurgency. International Crisis Group, 20-21.

All the insurgent groups use the internet as a primary means of communication. Many groups publish daily bulletins, either on their web sites or through mass emailings.[63] Their skillful use of the internet allows them attract support and recruits by directly communicating with the Iraqi public and the world in an unfiltered way that was never before possible. In the past, groups had to rely on newspapers or television to publicize their message.[64]

But information technology is not simply about better communications. By massively reducing the costs and time required to communicate and by increasing the sheer amount of information that can be transmitted, information technology makes dispersed networked organizations possible.[65] The Iraqi insurgent groups use the internet to coordinate actions, share tactical lessons, establish objectives, plan operations, and synchronize policy.[66] This is in contrast with a Maoist organization which needed an extensive hierarchy to coordinate its activities.

The United States appears to be targeting insurgent internet sites and is presumably attempting to monitor internet communications. The insurgents have become very adept at countering these efforts, for example, using email lists to replace deactivated web sites.[67] Given the dependence of a networked organization on information technology, this is a vulnerability which should be exploited more fully.

---

[63]Ibid., 1-3.

[64]Zanini and Edwards, 42.

[65]Ibid., 35-36.

[66]International Crisis Group, 4.

[67]Ibid., 1-2.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A modern, networked insurgency, such as the one in Iraq, is structurally very different from the Maoist movements of the twentieth century. Simply rehashing old strategies will not work. An effective counterinsurgency needs to understand the structure of the new insurgency and adapt its strategies accordingly.

The first step is to understand that the enemy is a network, not a hierarchy. Imposing a hierarchical framework on an amorphous organization will only hinder efforts.[68] As Bruce Hoffman wrote, "The problem in Iraq is that there appears to be no such static wiring diagram or organizational structure to identify, unravel, and systematically dismantle."[69]

The next step is to understand that networks are very difficult to destroy, but they can be disrupted. As Metz and Millen stated, operations should focus on "fracturing," "delinking," and "deresourcing" the insurgency.[70] Several avenues for disrupting the insurgent network have been discussed in this paper: critical nodes, narrative, support sources, and information technology.

First, attack critical nodes for maximum disruptive effect. Modern insurgencies do not have a hierarchy that can be pulled apart. Targeting the ostensible leadership is not likely to have a significant disruptive effect. People or cells with special skills or who act as critical communication links or perform non-redundant functions are key vulnerabilities of a network.

Second, networked insurgencies do not necessarily have strong political cohesion. Attack the narrative by forcing the insurgency to respond to issues that are outside its scope;

---

[68]Zuhur, 15.

[69]Hoffman, 18.

[70]Metz and Millen, 25-26.

this can disrupt or even fracture the movement as each group responds to the issue according to its own ideology. Ideological differences are a primary cause of fracturing within networked groups.[71] A counterinsurgency should take every opportunity to disrupt its adversary by promoting internal dissension.

Third, attack the sources of support. This cannot be done effectively through traditional population control measures; the counterinsurgency must understand where the movement obtains its resources. This may involve international cooperation to stop overseas funding streams. Given that insurgencies are increasingly turning to crime for financing, priority should be given to reducing crime and corruption to disrupt insurgent financing.[72]

Fourth, attack the information technology infrastructure of the network. A network is absolutely dependent on robust communications to function. It may be that information technology controls are the modern equivalent of the population controls that were used so successfully against Maoist insurgencies. One extreme proposal is to completely shut down the information technology grid in the insurgent areas: telephones, cellular towers, and so on. This could certainly have a disruptive effect on a networked organization, but more research is needed in this critical area.

The rich history of twentieth century counterinsurgency is a tempting source for those struggling to develop strategies against the modern insurgent. Certainly there are valuable lessons from these conflicts. However, the successful strategies of that era were all based on a detailed understanding of the enemy. To win against a modern insurgency, we need have an equally firm understanding of our adversary and not mistake him for something else.

---

[71]Gerlach, 292.

[72]Steven Metz, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2003-2004): 34.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arquilla, John and David Ronfeldt, eds. *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001.

Aylwin-Foster, Nigel. "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations." *Military Review* 85, no. 6 (November-December 2005): 2-15.

Bergerud, Eric M. *The Dynamics of Defeat: The Vietnam War in Hau Nghia Province.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991.

Biddle, Stephen. "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon." *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 2 (March-April 2006): 2-13.

Cassidy, Robert M. "Back to the Street Without Joy: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam and Other Small Wars." *Parameters* 34, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 73-83.

_____. "The British Army and Counterinsurgency: The Salience of Military Culture." *Military Review* 85, no. 3 (May-June 2005): 53-59.

_____. "Feeding Bread to the Luddites: The Radical Fundamentalist Islamic Revolution in Guerrilla Warfare." *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 16, no. 3 (December 2005): 334-359.

_____. *Russia in Afghanistan and Chechnya: Military Strategic Culture and the Paradoxes of Asymmetric Conflict.* Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2003.

Catignani, Sergio. "The Strategic Impasse in Low-Intensity Conflicts: The Gap Between Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy and Tactics During the Al-Aqsa Intifada." *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 28, no. 1 (February 2005): 57-75.

Combating Terrorism Center. *Harmony and Disharmony: Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*. West Point, NY: U.S. Military Academy Combating Terrorism Center, 2006.

Cordesman, Anthony H. "Iraq's Evolving Insurgency and the Risk of Civil War," working draft, updated April 26, 2006 [document on-line]. Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2006, accessed on 29 April 2006, available from http://www.csis.org/component/ option,com_csis_pub/task,view/id,3164/type,1/. Internet.

Davison, Walter P. *Some Observations on Viet Cong Operations in the Villages.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1967.

Duiker, William J. *The Communist Road to Victory in Vietnam.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981.

Evans, Ernest. "El Salvador's Lessons for Future U.S. Interventions." *World Affairs* 160, no. 1 (Summer 1997): 43-48.

Greenberg, Lawrence M. *The Hukbalahap Insurrection: A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines, 1946-1955.* Washington, D.C.: Analysis Branch, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1987.

Hammes, Thomas. "4th Generation Warfare." *Armed Forces Journal* 142, no. 4 (November 2004): 40-44.

_____. *Insurgency: Modern Warfare Evolves into a Fourth Generation.* Strategic Forum, no. 214. Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 2005.

Hoffman, Bruce. *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2004.

Hoffman, Bruce, Jennifer M. Taw, and David Arnold. *Lessons for Contemporary Counterinsurgencies: The Rhodesian Experience.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1991.

Hosmer, Stephen. *Viet Cong Repression and Its Implications for the Future.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1970.

International Crisis Group. *In Their Own Words: Reading the Iraqi Insurgency.* Middle East Report, no. 50. Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2006.

Kagan, Frederick W. "Iraq is Not Vietnam." *Policy Review* 134 (December 2005-January 2006): 3-14.

Kaufmann, Chaim. "Intervention in Ethnic and Ideological Civil Wars: Why One Can Be Done and the Other Can't." *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (Autumn 1996): 62-100.

Killcullen, David. "Countering Global Insurgency." *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 28, no. 4 (August 2005): 597-617.

_____. "Globalisation and the Development of Indonesian Counterinsurgency Tactics." *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 17, no. 1 (March 2006): 44-64.

Komer, Robert W. *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1972.

Krepinevich, Andrew, Jr. *The Army and Vietnam.* Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986.

_____. "How to Win in Iraq." *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 5 (September-October 2005): 87-104.

Laird, Melvin R. "Iraq: Learning the Lessons of Vietnam." *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 6 (November-December 2005): 22-43.

Lee, Chong-Sik. *Counterinsurgency in Manchuria: The Japanese Experience, 1931-1940.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1967.

Lesser, Ian O., Bruce Hoffman, John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt, and Michele Zanini. *Countering the New Terrorism.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1999.

Lewy, Guenter. *America in Vietnam.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Looney, Robert E. "The Business of Insurgency." *The National Interest* no. 81 (Fall 2005): 67-72.

Mao Tse-Tung. *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung.* Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1966.

Markel, Wade. "Draining the Swamp: The British Strategy of Population Control." *Parameters* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 35-48.

Marks, Thomas A. *Sustainability of Colombian Military/Strategic Support for "Democratic Security."* Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2005.

Marks, Thomas A. *Insurgency in Nepal.* Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2003.

McFadden, Eric M. "Contemporary Counterinsurgency Operations: History as a Guide to Assist in the Development of the Joint Interagency Task Force." *Comparative Strategy* 24 (October-November 2005): 361-378.

McFate, Montgomery. "Iraq: The Social Context of IEDs." *Military Review* 25, no. 3 (May-June 2005): 37-40.

Metz, Steven. "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq." *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2003-2004): 25-36.

Metz, Steven, and Raymond Millen. *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response.* Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2004.

Michael, George, and Joseph Scolnick. "The Strategic Limits of Suicide Terrorism in Iraq." *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 17, no. 2 (June 2006): 113-125.

Milton-Edwards, Beverley. "The Rise of Islamic Insurgency in Iraq." *The Journal of Conflict Studies* 25, no. 1 (Summer 2005): 48-71.

Nagl, John. *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife.* Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002.

Schnaubelt, Christopher M. "After the Fight: Interagency Operations." *Parameters* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2005-2006): 47-61.

Schubert, Frank N. "The American Military Tradition and Operations in the Immediate Post Cold Period (1989-2001)." *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 15, no. 2 (Autumn 2004): 185-200.

Sepp, Kalev I. "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency." *Military Review* 85, no. 3 (May-June 2005): 8-12.

Sun Tzu. *The Art of War.* Translated by Samuel B. Griffith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Thomas, Timothy L. "Russian Tactical Lessons Learned Fighting Chechen Separatists." *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 18 (December 2005): 731-766.

Tomes, Robert R. "Relearning Counterinsurgency." *Parameters* 34, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 16-28.

Van Creveld, Martin. *The Transformation of War.* New York: The Free Press, 1991.

Zuhur, Sherifa. *A Hundred Osamas: Islamist Threats and the Future of Counterinsurgency.* Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2005.